



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

FPB POLICY H-08-2

HAZARD IDENTIFICATION SIGNS CFC SECTION 2703.5 and NFPA 704

I. PURPOSE

This policy clarifies the requirements for hazard identification signs in buildings or areas with hazardous materials.

II. SCOPE

This policy shall apply to all buildings or sites where permit quantities of hazardous materials are stored, dispensed, used or handled.

III. DEFINITIONS

HAZARD RATINGS: Numbers that indicate the health, flammability, reactivity and special hazard conditions as described in NFPA 704.

NFPA 704 SIGN: A sign (placard) that identifies the hazard rating of hazardous materials as described in NFPA 704.

NON-ORIGINAL CONTAINER: A container other than the original shipping container in which a material was received from a manufacturer or supplier.

PLAIN ENGLISH: The commonly understood chemical name or category of a hazardous material.

IV. CALIFORNIA FIRE CODE (CFC) SECTIONS 2703.5 & 2703.5.1 IDENTIFICATION SIGNS

CFC Section 2703.5 States: ..."Visible hazard identification signs as specified in NFPA 704 are required to be placed on stationary containers and above-ground tanks and at entrances to locations where hazardous materials are stored, dispensed, used or handled in quantities requiring a permit and at specific entrances and locations designated by the Fire Code Official."

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CFC Section 2703.5.1 States, “Individual containers, cartons or packages shall be conspicuously marked or labeled in an approved manner. Rooms or cabinets containing compressed gases shall be conspicuously labeled “COMPRESSED GAS”.

V. *WHEN REQUIRED*

Hazard identification signs shall be provided in buildings, rooms or areas with permit quantities of hazardous materials. Permit quantities are those quantities as specified in Section 105.6, Appendix 1, 2007 CFC.

VI. *WHERE REQUIRED*

The type of hazard identification signs and location shall be as follows:

- A. Exterior and Interior Entrances to Rooms/Areas:** NFPA 704 Sign Located on the wall or door next to the latch part of the door with the top of the sign not more than three feet (3') above the floor unless otherwise approved by the Fire Code Official.
- B. Hazardous Materials Storage Cabinets:** Plain English and/or NFPA 704 Sign, on the front of the cabinet.
- C. Non-Original and Original Portable Containers Greater Than or Equal to 500 Milliliters and Packaging:** All containers and packaging require a plain English or NFPA 704 Sign on the container or packaging. The container or packaging shall be readily identifiable as to its hazard to emergency responders.
- D. Stationary Containers and Above Ground Tanks:** NFPA 704 Sign on the containers or tanks.
- E. Exterior Storage Areas:** NFPA 704 Sign, at the entrance or above the storage room/area.
- F. Individual Compressed Gas Cylinders:** Plain English or NFPA 704 Sign on the cylinder. The Cylinder shall be readily identifiable as to its hazard to emergency responders.
- G. Compressed Gas Storage Rooms/Areas:** NFPA 704 Sign and the words “compressed gas” and at the entrance or above the storage room/area.

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H. Compressed Gas Systems: If the system uses gases that are flammable or oxidizing a NFPA 704 Sign shall be attached to the wall behind and above the cylinders. Individual cylinders shall be identified by Plain English or a NFPA 704 Sign on the cylinder.

VII. SIZE

NFPA 704 Signs: The size NFPA 704 Signs required for rooms, areas, storage cabinets, tanks and containers shall be as follows:

Note: The size is dependent on the distance at which the placards/signs must be legible as determined by the Fire Code Official:

Distance at Which Placard Must Be Legible	Minimum Signal Size*	Minimum Sign (Placard) Size*
50' and less	1"	2" x 2" (Containers)
75'	2"	4" x 4" (Cabinets/Cylinders)
75'	2"	4" x 4" (Door/Wall)
100'	3"	6" x 6" (Exterior Door)
300' or more	6"	12" x 12" (Outside/Tanks)
*Signal & Placard: Each NFPA 704 placard is comprised of four (4) separate signals to identify the following material hazard conditions: Health (BLUE) Flammability (RED) Reactivity (YELLOW) Special Hazards (WHITE)		

Exception: For containers with a capacity of 4 liters or less, symbols can be reduced in size, provided the following:

- This reduction is proportional
- The color coding is retained
- The vertical and horizontal dimensions of the diamond are not less than 1 inch
- The individual numbers are no smaller than 1/8 inch tall

Promulgated by: _____

Date: _____

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